

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL  
Minutes  
October 3, 2006

The Edgefield County Council held its regular meeting at 6:00 P. M. Tuesday, October 3, 2006, in the County Council Chambers, 225 Jeter Street, Edgefield.

**Members present:**

C. Monroe Kneece, Chairman  
Willie C. Bright, Vice Chairman  
Norman Dorn, Councilman  
Joel D. Hudson, Councilman  
B. Everette Kitchens, Councilman

**Others present:**

Barbara R. Stark, Interim County Administrator  
John F. Byrd, County Attorney  
Lynn W. Strom, Finance/Budget Director  
and others as per list attached

Chairman Kneece called the council meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited after the invocation was given by Councilman Hudson.

**APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM CLERK TO COUNCIL**

Interim Administrator Stark recommended that Donna Lybrand be appointed as interim Clerk to Council on an as needed basis. Motion was made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilman Kitchens, to appoint Donna Lybrand as interim Clerk to Council on an as needed basis. Motion carried unanimously.

**MINUTES**

The September 5<sup>th</sup> Regular County Council Meeting and the September 26, 2006, Called Council Meeting, were approved by a motion made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilman Kitchens. Motion carried unanimously.

**REPORTS**

The chairman brought to council's attention a letter of resignation received from Henry Coleman as "C" Fund Administrator and the appointment of Howard Gibson as interim "C" Fund Administrator.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Public Hearings were held on the following ordinances to receive written and/or oral comments from the public:

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Ordinance No. 05-06-581, "An Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 05-06-579, the General Operating and Ancillary Budgets for FY 06-07, to Provide for Reassessment Revenues."

Ordinance No. 06-07-583, "An Ordinance Amending the Edgefield County Zoning Map to Change the Zoning Designation of Tax Map #137-00-00-012 From Residential-Agricultural Development (RD) to General Agricultural Development (GD)."

Ordinance No. 06-07-584, "An Ordinance Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of a Fee in Lieu of Tax Agreement By and Between Edgefield County, SC, and Southern Felt Company, Inc., With Respect to Certain Economic Development Property, Whereby Such Property Will Be Subject to Certain Payments in Lieu of Taxes and Other Matters Related Thereto."

Ordinance No. 06-07-585, "An Ordinance to Authorize the Second Multi-County Park Amendment the Agreement for Development of a Joint County Industrial and Business Park Dated As of December 31, 1996, Between Edgefield County, SC and Aiken County, SC ("Aiken County") to Include Additional Property in Aiken County as Part of the Joint County Industrial and Business Park."

No comments on the public hearing from the public, written or oral.

ORDINANCES

Third reading of Ordinance No. 06-07-581, "An Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 05-06-579, The General Operating and Ancillary Budgets for FY 06-07, to Provide For Reassessment Revenues was postponed to October 5, 2006, to ensure amendment reflects the millage rate agreed upon on Thursday's meeting. A motion to approve the postponement of third reading on Ordinance No. 06-07-581 was made by Councilman Bright and seconded by Councilman Kitchens. Motion carried unanimously.

Lynn Strom, Finance Director, explained to the audience how the millage rates are determined. The budget is set on expenses that the county has – that budget

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is 05-06-579 – the original budget. The millage rates are based on the revenue needs from that budget. The actual increase in the budget expenditures for the general fund (largest portion of budget) is ten and a half percent increase over prior year including the budget amendments.

Bill Gilchrist was asked what the millage increase is over the last millage increase. The auditor stated 15 mills – a percentage increase of 23%.

Third reading of Ordinance No. 06-07-582, “An Ordinance Authorizing Edgefield County, SC to Enter into a Lease/Purchase Transaction Relating to the Financing of An Ambulance and Related Equipment and Other Equipment Including But Not Limited to a Truck; Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of An Equipment Lease Purchase Agreement in An Amount Not to Exceed \$180,000; and Other Matters Relating Thereto” was approved by a motion made by Councilman Bright and seconded by Councilman Hudson. Motion carried unanimously.

Second reading of Ordinance No. 06-07-583, “An Ordinance Amending the Edgefield County Zoning Map to Change the Zoning Designation of Tax Map #137-00-00-012 From Residential-Agricultural Development (RD) to General Agricultural Development (GD)” was approved by a motion made by Councilman Dorn and seconded by Councilman Kitchens. Motion carried unanimously.

A citizen asked about zoning in the Mt. Vintage area. Howard Gibson explained that there is no zoning in Mt. Vintage – you have covenants to protect that division. There are several areas of the county that are RD that are very strict that do not allow manufactured homes – things of that nature. General Development does do that and allows some types of businesses. It is just a classification allowing different things to be brought into the county. It's a control on growth. Taxes are not based on zoning – it is based entirely on use.

The question was asked if changing this from residential to agriculture would allow something like chicken houses. Mr. Gibson stated that this particular zoning request is one lot on a road that is across the road from general development. It was split when zoning came around. There are three houses on the side that is RD. The lady requesting rezoning lives in a manufactured home and her home is prohibited due to where the line is draw. The lady is asking if the zoning can be changed.

Second reading of Ordinance No. 06-07- 584, “An Ordinance Authorizing the Execution & Delivery of a Fee In Lieu of Tax Agreement by & Between Edgefield County, South Carolina, & Southern Felt Company, Inc., With Respect to Certain

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Economic Development Property, Whereby Such Property Will Be Subject to Certain Payments in Lieu of Taxes & Other Matters Related Thereto" was approved by a motion made by Councilman Kitchens and seconded by Councilman Hudson. Motion carried unanimously.

Second reading of Ordinance No. 06-07- 585, "An Ordinance to Authorize the Second Multi-County Park Amendment the Agreement for Development of a Joint County Industrial & Business Park Dated as of December 31, 1996, Between Edgefield County, South Carolina and Aiken County, South Carolina ("Aiken County") to Include Additional Property in Aiken County as Part of the Joint County Industrial & Business Park" was approved by a motion made by Councilman Bright and seconded by Councilman Hudson. Motion carried unanimously.

No resolutions.

NEW BUSINESS

Presentation of millage rate for current tax year by Bill Gilchrist, Auditor

A handout was given out which contained information and figures pertaining to the millage rate. Mr. Gilchrist stated that when the new reassessment values were mailed, the total increase in assessed value before any changes is about 33% this year. You back down from that number (changes with property going from 6% to 4% - appeals through reassessment). You have to back down because you do not want to get where you put too much on the board for your budget and not take in as much money. Instead of 33%, basically you are looking at 28%.

Gilchrist stated that the county is facing a depleting manufacturing and vehicle tax base as far as assessed value. Those two items alone this year were down about 14-½%. Actually, in this budget to be passed, the value of a mill for county operations is only 13.5%. Manufacturing in reassessment year with textiles, they can appeal their values on real property. So, you are looking at a flat 10% decrease in real value on textile mills currently in the whole state where reassessment applies. The vehicles in 2001 were taxed at 10-1/2; 2006 we are at 6.75; January 2007 we go to 6%. Although residentially we are growing as a county, we have more vehicles on the road but the values come in every year depreciating as always but they are also being applied to a lower percentage rate. He said Edgefield County probably has the best residential growth of any county our size in the state. But, building a tax base on residential growth is a formula for destruction due to the fact that services exceed revenues on residential growth due to fire, EMS, Law Enforcement and infrastructure needs. Gilchrist asked if there were any questions.

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A large number of concerned property owners from the Mt. Vintage sub-division began questioning about their tax increase. Reassessment is mandated by the state of South Carolina every five years. A comment was made that for the millage rate to be reduced, the budget would have to be cut? Mt. Vintage developer Bettis Rainsford made a comment in reference to raising the \$500,000.00. He claimed that the additional tax based on the lot sales year to date at Mt. Vintage, that alone year to date will result in \$720,000.00 in additional tax revenue in the 2007 year. This figure is correct assuming they are assessed at the sales price which they sold at this current year and assuming a 6% assessment. Also, Mt. Vintage Development has brought in over \$55,000.00 in deed recordings in the Clerk of Court's Office year to date.

Chairman Kneece stated they would tweak the budget by Thursday night to figure out what Council can do. Councilman Kitchens suggested a spot check on the assessment. Chairman Kneece suggested a postponement on the third reading of the budget.

A work session was scheduled for October 10, 2006, at 6:00 p.m. and the regular session was set for October 17, 2006, (changed to October 19<sup>th</sup> due to advertising the meeting) at 6:00 p.m. Council is to address the issue to see if they can decrease the millage rate to match the money.

#### Magistrate Office Security Request

Judge Parkman requested to replace a wooden door with a metal door for security purposes. Howard Gibson gave information on the existing door and the construction of the door. The request is for \$900.00. Leak damage in the building has used up the monies for maintenance on the building. A motion was made by Councilman Bright and seconded by Councilman Hudson to approve the \$900 request. Motion passed unanimously. The funds will be taken from contingency.

#### Right-of-Way swap between Fox Creek High School and Edgefield County

A handout was given showing the site involved at the intersection of Shortcut Road and Stephens Road. This site was owned by the Medical College of Georgia and now owned by Fox Creek High School. There is a site distance problem. The split of the land with one entrance/exit will eliminate the problem. A motion was made by Councilman Hudson to approve the request for right-of-way swap between Fox Creek High School and Edgefield County, and seconded by Councilman Kitchens. Motion passed unanimously.

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Transfer request in Recreation budget

Transfer from 035-005-05278-05226 (originally budgeted for garbage collection boxes) to 035-005-05278-05385 in order to purchase a reel mower. Expected cost of the mower is around \$9,000. Only \$3,000 was originally budgeted for this item. A motion was made by Councilman Bright and a second by Councilman Kitchens. Motion passed unanimously. Councilman Bright made a motion to override the purchase agreement of \$3000.00. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Kneece welcomed the guests and thanked them for their attendance.

No guests asked to address council.

Claims approved as follows:

- A.    PAYROLL:            8/28/06 thru 9/10/06
- Regular.....\$207,654.42
- PAYROLL:            9/11/06 thru 9/24/06
- Regular.....\$209,091.31
- B.    General Operating.....\$698,013.15

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Councilman Kitchens and seconded by Councilman Hudson to convene in executive session pursuant to Code Section 30-4-70 (a) (1) of the SC Code of Laws 1976, as amended, to consider applications received for the position of County Administrator, and returning to regular session at the discretion of the Chairman. Motion passed unanimously.

Returning to regular session, Chairman Kneece stated that a list of five possible candidates was being brought forward for further consideration.

There being no further business, Councilman Dorn made the motion to adjourn. The next regular meeting of council will be held Tuesday, November 7, 2006.

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C. Monroe Kneece, Chairman

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Willie C. Bright, Vice Chairman

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Norman Dorn, Councilman

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Joel D. Hudson, Councilman

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B. Everette Kitchens, Councilman

ATTEST

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Donna Lybrand, Acting Clerk to Council